

SECRET

State Dept. review completed

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 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7333
 INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 3476
 RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE 3330
 RUEHRH/USELO RIYADH IMMEDIATE 780
 RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 68
 BT
 S E C R E T BAGHDAD 1935

EXDIS

E012356 DECL OADR
 TAGS: PREL, IZ, KS
 SUBJ: POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN IRAQI-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS

1. SECRET -- ENTIRE TEXT.
 2. DURING HIS MEETING AUGUST 16 WITH COBOL SOLARZ, FONMIN TARIQ AZIZ, IN REVIEWING THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR JOINT EFFORTS TO SEVER THE FLOW OF ARMS TO IRAN, DROPPED THE TANTALIZING ASIDE THAT HE EXPECTED IRAQI TO DO "SOMETHING POSITIVE" IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN REGARD TO ITS CURRENT RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA.

3. IN A PRIVATE DISCUSSION AUGUST 18 AT A NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION, I DREW THE ATTENTION OF THE HEAD OF THE MFA FIRST INTERNATIONAL DIVISION (DEVELOPED COUNTRIES), AMABASSADOR HADDawi, TO AZIZ'S REMARK AND ASKED WHAT IT MEANT. HADDawi CONFIRMED THAT SOMETHING POSITIVE WAS INDEED LIKELY TO OCCUR BUT WOULD NOT SPECIFY FURTHER. HADDawi ALSO COMMENTED THAT IRAQ FELT IT HAD BEEN CLOSE TO AGREEMENT WITH NORTH KOREA ON STOPPING THE LATTER'S ARMS SHIPMENTS TO IRAN, BUT NORTH KOREA IN THE END HAD BACKED AWAY FROM AN AGREEMENT AND DECIDED TO CONTINUE TO SUPPLY IRAN. I TOLD HADDawi NO ONE SHOULD HAVE ANY FAITH IN DPRK PROMISES AND THAT THE ROK DESERVED REWARD FOR ITS STRONG STAND IN THE FACE OF GREAT COMMERCIAL PRESSURE.

4. COMMENT. TARIQ AZIZ IS TOO EXPERIENCED A STATESMAN NOT TO HAVE DROPPED THIS HINT DELIVERATELY ON A POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA. GIVEN THE USUAL RELUCTANCE OF OTHER MFA OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS SUBSTANCE, HADDawi'S VAGUE CONFRMATION IS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN THAT THE GOI IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING SUCH A STEP. IN THIS CONTEXT ANY ROK SUCCESS IN CONVINCING THE GOI THAT IT IS ACTIVELY WORKING TO PREVENT PRIVATE SOUTH KOREAN SALES WOULD SEEM PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AND TIMELY. NEWTON

END OF MESSAGE

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